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ABSTRACT

This guide, part of a series of booklets for parents of deaf-blind children developed by Project STEP (Steps Toward Effective Production of Speech), considers the use of rewards in shaping or changing the behavior of deaf-blind children. The types of rewards (e.g., food, drink, touch, action, something to listen to or look at) and selection of appropriate rewards are covered in an initial part of the booklet. Examples of ways in which rewards can help parents with children who do not like to be touched, who have inappropriate mannerisms, and who don't like solid food are described. Considerations in shaping, and writing objectives are addressed. Definitions of 16 relevant terms (such as continuous reinforcement, goals, objectives, and successive approximation) conclude the booklet. (CL)

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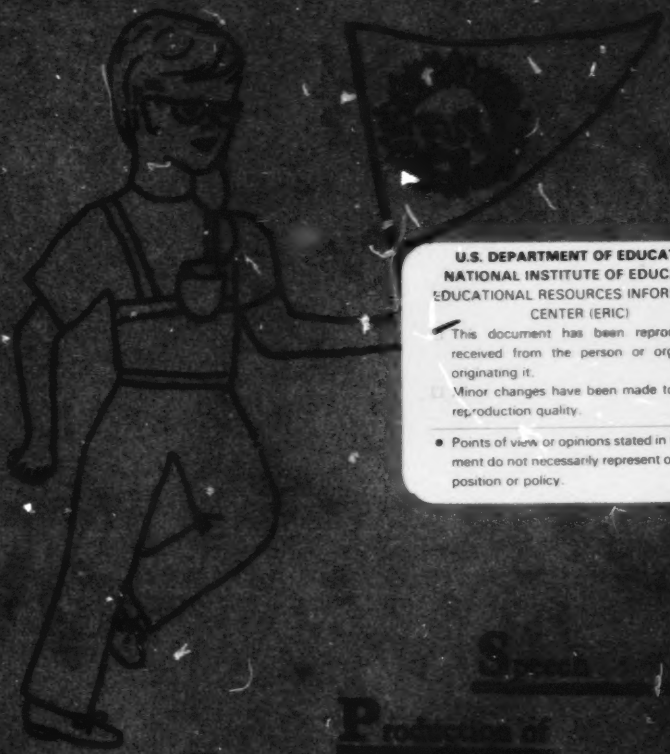

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Steps Toward Effective Production of Steps

STEPS

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Steps Toward Effective Production of Speech (STEPS) A Set of Booklets for Parents of Deaf-Blind Children

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The University of Alabama—
Department of
Communicative Disorders
Area of Special Education
Partlow State School and Hospital
1984

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

What is a reward?

A reward can be something to eat. Or it can be a hug. A reward for your child must be something he likes and wants.

Who can give rewards?

Anyone who is around your child can give rewards. They can be given by parents, other family members, friends, and teachers.

When should a reward be given?

Right after your child does something you want him to do.

Where should rewards be given?

You can give your child a reward any place. Rewards can be given at home, outdoors, on trips, and at school.

Why give rewards to deaf-blind children?

A child who is deaf-blind needs to learn many things. He needs to learn to wear hearing aids and glasses. He needs to learn how to get around by himself. It will take him a long time to learn some things that other children learn right away.

Rewards can help your child learn what he should do. They can also help him learn what not to do. Rewards can make learning fun for your child.

How can I find out more about rewards?

Read this booklet. The next page tells where to find things. Also, ask your child's teacher for help in using rewards.

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REWARDS

Rewards are important to everyone. Adults get rewards, such as praise, for work done well. Or they earn money for doing a job.

Here are two more examples of rewards.

- ☐ Looking better is a reward for going on a diet.
- ☐ Interest is a reward for saving money.

Everyone gets rewards. They make people feel good and work harder.

Children enjoy rewards, too. If a child works hard at school, he may be rewarded with a good grade. Then, when he brings his report card home, he is rewarded with praise.

Children get other rewards too. If a child does jobs around the house, he may earn some money. If he eats all his food, he may be rewarded with dessert.

Different children are rewarded by different things. Some children like cereal very much. Cereal can be used to reward them. A child who likes peanuts better than cereal can be rewarded with peanuts. Another child, who likes to listen to music, can be rewarded by music.

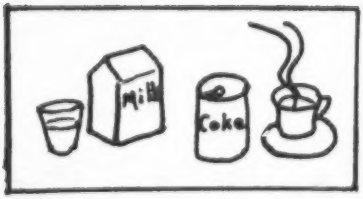
A reward must be something a child likes. If he does not like cereal, then cereal is not a reward for him.

Sometimes you need to change the reward. After giving several pieces of cereal, give your child something else. Give him a sip of juice as a reward.

KINDS OF REWARDS

There are many rewards that can be used. Some are listed on the next pages, but there are still many others.

Food. A piece of cereal, a small piece of fruit, a peanut, a raisin, a little piece of candy, a taste of peanut butter.



Drink. A sip of fruit juice, milk, soft drink, lemonade.

Touch. A pat, a hug, rubbing the shoulders or back, tickling, warm air from a hair dryer, cool air from a fan, something that shakes or vibrates.

Action. Being picked up, being raised up in the air, being swung, being rocked, being danced with, playing pat-a-cake or other games.

Something to Listen to. Praise, music (a radio, records, whistling, a piano, a guitar, and so on), singing games, talking, sound toys.

Something to Look at. A smile, a wink, brightly colored toys, colored lights, a flashlight, pictures, TV, peek-a-boo games, books, magazines, a mirror.

REWARDS FOR YOUR CHILD

Sometimes it is hard to find what will reward a child. You may have to try a lot of different things.

Watch him when you are feeding him and playing with him to see what he likes. You will know he likes something if he laughs or wants more.

Not all children like the same thing. Music may be a reward for one child, but not another.

Look for different kinds of things that he likes. For example, he may like raisins, hugs, and playing in water. At first it may help to make a list of things he likes.

You child's teacher will want to use rewards too. Be sure to tell the teacher what your child likes.

As your child grows, he will like more and more things. Watch to see what new things he learns to like. You and the teacher can tell each other what your child likes.

CHOOSING REWARDS

Suppose you want to teach your child to copy what you do. You will tap the table and then show him that he is to tap the table. When he taps the table, give him a smile, a pat, and praise. These are good rewards for this job because they do not stop him from tapping the table.

You would not reward your child for tapping the table by taking him to play in a sink of water. It would take too much time. And

it would take him away from tapping the table.

Here is another example of a good reward. If your child is making sounds that you make, reward him with something like a sip of juice. Do not give him a large piece of cereal. It would stop him from making sounds. You could give a tiny piece of cereal though. He could eat it quickly and soon be ready to make more sounds.

Do not give your child too much food as a reward. If you do, he will not eat well at mealtime. Do not use candy all the time. Use other food like fruit and cereal. If you use an apple, cut it up into tiny pieces. Do not give large pieces of food as a reward.

Food is not a good reward after a meal or snack. Your child will not work as well for food then.

Use other rewards such as playing with a flashlight, shaking a rattle, or listening to a song.

EXAMPLE ONE: A Child Who Did Not Like To Be Touched

Martha is three years old. She has had a hearing loss from birth. She is also blind, but she can see light. She likes juice, candy, cookies, squeaky toys, and flashlights.

Martha has never liked to be picked up. When her parents tried

to cuddle her, she screamed and cried. This would upset her parents.

Here is how Martha learned to let her mother touch her. Each day after lunch, Mother would sit beside Martha. They would sit on the sofa in the living room. Mother would shine a flashlight on the pillow near Martha. Martha would want to play with the light.

On the first day Mother let her play with the flashlight while she rubbed Martha's back. After a while Martha lost interest in the flashlight and moved away.

For the next week they did the same thing every day. Martha would play with the light each day for five to ten minutes.

Then for the next few days Mother got a squeaky toy along

with the flashlight. Martha played with the toy for a few minutes and then with the light. All the while, Mother rubbed her back.

The next day Mother held the toy so Martha had to climb in her lap to get it. She played with it in Mother's lap for a minute and then threw it. Before Martha could go after it, Mother turned on the flashlight. Martha played with the light for almost a minute. Then she wanted to get down.

Mother turned off the light and let her move away.

Each day after that, Martha would sit in Mother's lap for a couple of minutes. Then she would play with the flashlight and squeaky toy. Mother did not give her these two things to play with at other times.

After lunch one day, Martha went to the sofa to wait for Mother to come. When Mother sat down, Martha climbed in her lap. Martha played with the light and toy for a short time. Then she was ready to play by herself.

WHEN TO REWARD

When you want to teach your child to do something, plan for it. Before you start, decide what rewards to use. If the rewards are food or toys, put them beside you. Then you will be able to give a reward at just the right time.

The time to give a reward is right after your child does what you want him to do. Do not wait—not even a little bit. Give the reward right away. This way he will know what it is for.

Suppose your child does something right. But before you can reward him, he does something wrong. Do not reward him when this happens. If you do, he will think the reward is for what he did wrong.

Suppose you are teaching your child to say, *"Mama."* He says, *"Mama,"* and then pokes his eye. You do not give him a reward. If you did, he might think the reward was for poking his eye.

A reward may be given for many different things.

- ☐ You can reward your child for doing the thing you are teaching him.
- ☐ You can reward him for doing something you taught him before.
- ☐ You can reward him for being good.

For example, your child is being good when he lets you know he needs to go to the toilet. Reward him for doing things like this.

You can not reward your child for every good thing he does all day long. You need to choose which things to reward. Suppose you want to teach Martha to sit in your lap. When you begin to teach her, reward her every time she does it.

Later on Martha may sit in your lap two or three times during the day. Then you will not reward her with the toy and flashlight every time. You can reward her every second or third time.

EXAMPLE TWO: A Child Who Had a Mannerism

Ray is ten years old. His mother had German measles when she was carrying him. He was born with a hearing loss and total blindness. He likes his toy guitar and warm air from a hair dryer. He also likes things that shake or vibrate.

Ray pushes his fingers in his eyes when he is bored. (This is a mannerism of some blind

children.) He likes to do this because it makes him "see" spots of light.

Ray should not poke his eyes. Even though he can not see, poking can damage his eye. It could change the shape of the eyeball or cause a disease. Also, people do not like to see a child poke his eye.

This is how Ray learned not to push his fingers in his eyes. His parents and teachers worked together. They all rewarded him for not poking his eyes.

Ray's parents and teachers agreed to give him tokens. They gave Ray a token when he did not poke his eyes. (A token could be a poker chip, a bead, or some other little object.) Later, Ray can trade his tokens for something he wants.

They decided to check him 14 times a day. They checked him every hour. His parents checked him at 7:00 and 8:00 in the morning. Then his teacher checked him at 9:00, 10:00 and so on. Later in the day his parents checked him at 4:00 and every hour until 8:00 at night.

Ray's parents used a timer. They set it to ring in one hour. When it rang they checked Ray. They gave him a token if he was not poking his eyes. Then they set the timer for another hour.

Ray knew he could trade his tokens. He could use them to "buy" something he wanted. For five tokens he could play with his guitar. Or for five tokens he could play with a vibrator. This shakes and makes his skin feel good. His

teacher has other things he can buy at school.

After a while Ray learned not to poke his eyes so much. His parents and teacher wanted him to do it less and less. So they made some changes. Sometimes they set the timer for 15 minutes, and sometimes for 45 minutes. They still checked him every time the timer rang.

Sometimes Ray's parents and teacher changed the prices of things. Every Sunday they decided how many tokens to charge for the rest of the week. They always let Ray know the prices for the guitar, the vibrator, and so on. They were careful not to charge too many tokens. So Ray could buy something every day.

Also, they were careful not to set the prices too low. If they were

too low, Ray would not have to try hard to get what he wanted.

SHAPING

Rewarding each step that a child learns is called shaping. Each step brings the child closer to doing what you want him to do.

Sometimes a child can not do what you want him to do at first. He has to learn to do it step by step. You could reward him for each step he learns to do. You

could also reward him for trying to do the next step.

In the next example Tammy's mother wanted her to eat solid food. First she rewarded Tammy for eating mashed food mixed with a little solid food. Then she rewarded her for eating a bite of solid food now and then. She was getting Tammy closer and closer to eating solid food by itself.

EXAMPLE THREE: A Child Who Did Not Like Solid Food

Tammy has a moderate hearing loss and is blind. Her parents have different blood types (Rh incompatibility). This caused her hearing and vision problems when she was born.

Now Tammy is two years old. She likes mashed food, having her hair brushed, and being picked up and swung. She will not eat solid foods. When Tammy's mother gives her anything solid, she spits it out.

This is how Mother tried to get Tammy to eat solid food. She mixed some soft green peas with mashed potatoes. Then she gave Tammy a few bites and she ate them. Then Mother gave Tammy a bite of peas. She spit them out.

Again, Mother gave Tammy mashed potatoes mixed with just a few peas. At the same time Mother brushed Tammy's hair. If she started to spit out her food, Mother stopped brushing her hair.

The next day Mother added a little soft fruit to pudding for dessert. Tammy ate the first few bites while Mother brushed her hair. Then Tammy would not take another bite. So Mother stopped brushing Tammy's hair and feeding her.

The next day Mother fixed mashed carrots. She added some small pieces of carrot to the mashed ones. She fed Tammy the carrots and brushed her hair at the

same time. Tammy ate all the carrots.

Little by little Mother added solid food to mashed food. After a while Tammy was eating some solid food at every meal.

Later on Mother wanted Tammy to eat more solid food. She would give her four or five bites of solid and soft food mixed. Then she would give her a bite of solid food. She brushed Tammy's hair when she gave her a bite of solid food.

Mother does not brush Tammy's hair at every meal now. Sometimes after Tammy finishes eating, she has her hair brushed.

WRITING OBJECTIVES

An objective is what you want a person to do. It helps to write down step by step what you want done. Then you can tell when you have finished each step.

An objective can have four parts. It can tell

- ☐ what is to be done
- ☐ when it is to be done
- ☐ how well it is to be done
- ☐ who is to do it

The next example shows how to write objectives.

EXAMPLE FOUR: A Child Who Did Not Wear His Hearing Aid and Glasses

Norman is five years old. When he was two years old, he had meningitis. It caused a very severe hearing loss. It also caused poor vision, but he can still see colors and the shape of things.

Norman likes cereal and fruits. He also likes to bang a pan with a spoon and to play finger games. The audiologist told Norman's parents that he needed a hearing aid. The eye doctor said he should have glasses. So his parents got him a hearing aid and a pair of glasses.

Norman did not like his hearing aid or his glasses. When mother put his hearing aid on, he pulled it out of his ear. When she put it

back on and held it in place, he kicked and cried. Norman acted the same way with his glasses.

His parents tried the hearing aid and glasses several times. But Norman would never wear them. After a while they put the aid and glasses in a drawer.

Three years later a home teacher began to visit Norman's home. She worked with his parents. They talked about things Norman needed to learn to do. One thing he needed to learn was to use his hearing aid and glasses.

The teacher helped Norman's parents get to see the audiologist. She said Norman's hearing had not changed. She checked the hearing aid and said Norman should learn to use it. She made new earmolds since Norman had outgrown the old ones.

Norman's parents and teachers wrote a plan to follow. It said that Norman and his mother would have work times together. One work time would be in the morning; another would be in the afternoon. His father would have work time with Norman in the evening.

The plan said the teacher would visit once every two weeks. It also said Norman's parents could call the teacher. They should call if they had a problem and needed help.

Part of the plan was to use a hearing aid harness. A harness helps keep a body hearing aid safe. It has one or two pockets to hold hearing aids. It also has straps over the shoulders and around the chest. Norman was to wear the harness every day. When he got dressed each morning, he and his mother were to put it on him. Then he was to wear it all day.

The plan also had objectives. They wrote several objectives and each was a small step. These are the objectives they wrote for Norman. The objectives are for each work time.

1. Norman will let his mother rub his ear with cotton six times.
2. Norman will leave the cotton in his ear for one minute.

3. Norman will leave the cotton in his ear for five minutes.

4. Norman will let his mother put the new earmold in his ear.

5. Norman will leave the earmold in his ear for five minutes.

6. Norman's mother will snap the hearing aid receiver onto the earmold. Norman will

wear his earmold *and receiver* for five minutes.

NOTE: The earmold and receiver are snapped together first. Then the earmold is put in the ear.

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7. Norman's mother will plug the cord into the receiver. Norman will wear his earmold, receiver, *and cord* for five minutes.
8. Norman will wear his aid (all the parts) for five minutes. The aid will be turned off.
9. Norman will wear his aid *turned on* for five minutes.
10. Norman will wear his aid turned on for *ten* minutes.
11. Norman will wear his aid turned on for *20* minutes.

The first objective was easy. Norman liked having his ear rubbed with cotton. So his mother went on to the second objective. She put the cotton in his ear for a minute.

When they got to objective 5, they had trouble. Norman would not let the earmold stay in his ear for five minutes. Objective 5 was too big a step for Norman. So his mother wrote some new objectives.

The first new objective said the earmold would be worn for one-half minute. They soon reached this objective. The next new objective was to use the mold for one minute. After a while they reached objective 5, wearing the earmold for five minutes.

A few weeks after beginning the first objective, Norman was wear-

ing his aid for 20 minutes. And he was doing it three times a day. He was ready to wear the aid longer and longer. After a few more weeks he wore it all day.

Later he learned to wear it in one ear for a while and then in the other ear. At last he was ready to try an aid in each ear at the same time.

His mother followed the same plan to get him to wear his glasses. She went step by step. She started by putting a pipe cleaner

over one ear at first. Soon he was wearing his glasses for five minutes during work time.

When they went outside, she would put on her sunglasses. Then she should put Norman's sunglasses on him. After several weeks he was wearing his glasses for all of the work time. Later, he was wearing them all day.

REMEMBER —

① REWARDS MUST BE THINGS YOUR CHILD LIKES AND WANTS.

See page 6 and 7.

② GIVE A REWARD RIGHT AWAY.

See page 19.

③ REWARD EACH NEW STEP.

See page 26 and 27.

WORDS AND MEANINGS

These are some words that are used in talking about rewards. The words in large print are used in this booklet. The words in small print are not used here. But you may hear them or read them somewhere else.

behavior—The way a person acts, or what he does.
behavior modification—The use of *goals* and *rewards* to change the way a person behaves.
chaining—Teaching a job by going one step at a time. After one step is learned, the next step is added.
charting—Keeping a record of how well a child is learning something.
continuous reinforcement—Giving a *reward* every time a person does a certain thing.
criterion—A standard of how well a person should learn to do something.
extinction—The dying out of a *behavior*. It can be due to stopping rewards.
goal—A statement of what we want a person to learn to do. It covers a longer time than an *objective*. This is an example of a goal: "Mary will learn to drink from a cup without help." A goal can include several objectives.

intermittent reinforcement—Giving a *reward* sometimes, but not always, after a person does a certain thing.

negative reinforcement—Something a child does not like. It stops when he does what you want.

objective—(behavioral objective; instructional objective) What we want a person to do. It includes (1) the action to be learned, (2) when the action takes place, and (3) how well the action must be learned. The objective usually tells what is to be learned in several days or a few weeks. This is an example of an objective: "Mary will help to lift the cup to her mouth every time she wants a drink."

reinforcement—(positive reinforcement) A reward. The use of rewards to help a person learn.

reward—Something that can be given to a person after he does what you want him to do. A reward could be a smile, a pat on the back, or saying, "That's fine."

Or it could be a bit of something to eat, like a piece of cereal. Or it can be something to collect, like poker chips or play money. A reward must be something that a person wants or likes.

shaping—Rewarding each action that gets closer to what we want a person to do.

successive approximation—The use of *rewards* to change a person's behavior bit by bit. You give him rewards as he gets closer and closer to doing the thing you want. If he does not improve, he must try again for the reward.

task analysis—Finding out each of the small steps needed to do a job. A task analysis for drinking from a cup includes reaching out for the cup, holding the cup, bringing the cup up to the mouth, and so on.

THE FIRST STEP IS THE HARDEST.

—MARIE DE VICHY-CHAMROND

☐ Additional copies of this booklet are available from

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